

PREVENTION MATTERS

Energy Drinks Aren't Soda

In the more than dozen years since the first energy drink came on the scene in the U.S. (Red Bull, 1997), there are now over 1,000 energy drinks on the market with more being introduced all the time. The United States is the world's largest market for energy drinks, with total retail sales expected to exceed \$9 billion by 2011. In 2006, U.S. consumers drank enough energy drinks to fill more than 396 Olympic-size swimming pools.

There are a lot of misconceptions about energy drinks. Many people think they are similar to sports drinks like Gatorade and Powerade, differ little from sodas like Coke or Pepsi, or have about the same caffeine as a cup of coffee.

In fact, energy drinks are more dangerous than any of these other beverages. They are not sports drinks but actually *dehydrate* the body. And energy drinks contain far greater quantities of caffeine than sodas.



Even coffee and tea are typically lower in caffeine content per serving.

Another danger of energy drinks is they are often packaged in multi-serving size cans or bottles, but are consumed as a single serving. Monster has 32 oz. size cans that are labeled as 4 servings/can, and the entire can contains 10,000 mg. of the company's "energy blend" - *that's 24 times greater* than the recommended daily amount of for caffeine of 400 mg.

Other ingredients that are added to energy drink pose another danger. While guarana, taurine, ginseng, B-vitamins, bitter orange, and other

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Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medication Abuse

Prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) medications are the fastest growing substance of abuse. American youth now abuse prescription medications more than any illicit substance except marijuana. Rx and OTC medicines are also abused by adults and older adults.



Because they are medicines, many people mistakenly think Rx and OTC medications are less harmful to use to achieve a high than inhalants, LSD, meth or other illicit substances. It is also not perceived to be as taboo because Rx and OTC medicines are legal products.

Self-medication and sharing meds are other risks of Rx and OTC medicines. Without understanding how a drug may interact with your unique body chemistry or with other medicines you are taking, adding another chemical can be dangerous. Just because a certain medication works for one person doesn't mean it's the right choice for someone else.

When Rx and OTC medicines are misused or abused, people can easily become addicted or experience other medical problems such as seizures, strokes, comas, and even death.

Rx and OTC medications are also targets for theft. Wallowa County has experienced many of these thefts in recent years. Stolen medications are then

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WALLOVA VALLEY TOGETHER PROJECT

WVTP is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing prevention services in the areas of substance use, underage drinking, problem gambling, suicide, teen pregnancy, bullying, and internet/tech & media safety.

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The *Prevention Matters* newsletters are available as PDF color documents on WVTP's website.



The *none before 21*[™]
underage drinking
prevention and awareness
campaign



'Sexting' – An Increasing Concern

In the past two years, there have been several incidents of sexting, most involving teens, reported in the national media. 'Sexting' is when nude or partially nude photos are exchanged via cell phone, though it can also include when such photos are sent electronically by computer.

Kids sext for various reasons – to show off, to flirt, to attract someone, to prove feelings or commitment. A 2009 national study found that, of the teens ages 12-17 surveyed,

- 15% have received nude or partially nude photos of someone they know by cell phone texting (sexting).
- 4% have sent nude or partially nude photos of themselves to someone they know via sexting.

But too often those sext messages get forwarded to other people who were never intended to see them. And once sent, virtual messages and photos cannot be completely erased.

Parents need to be aware that sexting does occur and talk with their kids about the consequences – emotional, social, and legal. They should also talk with their kids about what is appropriate cell phone use and their family rules and expectations.

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are then used, traded, or sold – some Rx medicines sell for \$20 a pill.



Protect yourself, your family, and others by following these simple tips:

- ✓ Keep all medicines in a secure location, locked if possible
- ✓ Monitor quantities of all medications
- ✓ Properly dispose of unused medicines and their containers; don't keep them on hand 'just in case.' Unless specifically recommended by the manufacturer, do not flush medicines.
- ✓ If you are missing any medications or suspect your medicine may have been tampered with, report it immediately to your local law enforcement agency.

For more information, visit our website at http://wvtp.org/other_drugs.html.

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ingredients are natural, this does not mean they are safe. The combination of ingredients results in synergistic effects that vary from one person to another because of each person's unique body chemical make-up. And the total amount of stimulants - natural or otherwise - poses a great risk.

Energy drinks pose a threat to anyone who drinks them, both youths and adults. They can produce a range of side effects including heart irregularities, chest pains, tremors, sleep disturbances, nausea, vomiting, obesity, tooth decay, dehydration, toxicity, and even heart attacks.

Retailers can help protect youth by instituting their own store policy to not sell energy drinks or other energy products to anyone under 18. Schools can protect youth by not allowing energy drinks on campus or to be sold from campus vending machines. Parents can educate their kids about the dangers of energy drinks and instilling healthy eating, exercise, and sleep habits. And every adult can role model with their own healthy behaviors and choices.